

SCRANTON TRIBUNE
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THE SCRANTON TRIBUNE.

SCRANTON, MARCH 14, 1894.

Enter offerings will not catch the eye of the multitude until they are properly advertised in the leading Scranton paper.

THE POLE TAX AGAIN.

In our local report of last evening's session of the tax committee of select council will be found a complete presentation of the various views expressed by representatives of the electrical companies affected by the pending dollar pole tax ordinance. Each statement merits attentive perusal. It is the aim of this TRIBUNE in this matter, as in all similar issues affecting the welfare of the city, to give every side a fair hearing and to reach no conclusion without having first honestly and earnestly sought to weigh all the presented evidence. In this instance we shall reserve the right to defer consideration of the special plea of the electrical company agents until we can discuss them at greater length and with more care than is possible in the brief time elapsing before these words must be placed in type. There has been, in the recent discussion of this pole tax ordinance, rather too little careful thought. We do not intend to fall into the error of dismissing, in flippant fashion, a subject that properly deserves the best and most prudent attention that can be accorded to it. For the present, then, we shall confine ourselves to a summary of the actual statements made before the tax committee, together with some casual comments with reference to the people's side of the case.

In his statement in behalf of the illuminating, Heat and Power company, Dr. B. H. Throop dwelt upon the fact that his company was not paying dividends and did not expect soon to pay any. Under the circumstances, he did not regard a tax on its poles as a fair procedure on the part of a city which had encouraged the location of new industries here by offers of exemption from taxation. A similar statement was made by F. E. Platt, representing the Suburban Electric Light company. The plea of Richard O'Brien, for the Western Union Telephone company and the Central Telephone company, was in corresponding vein, and devoted much attention to the smallness of the telephone company's dividends and the increasing expense of the telephone company's necessary improvements. General Manager Archer, for the Scranton Traction company, reviewed the progress made by his corporation during the period of his active management, cited the liberal concessions made to the people of Scranton and the improved service given them, and stated that arrangements were already in progress for the introduction of safety fenders and of combination poles that would do away with 75 per cent. of the supports now dotting Lackawanna avenue. The speech of H. E. Paine on behalf of the board of trade was a contention in favor of the ordinance not chiefly because of the revenue that its enactment would produce, but because it would reduce the large present number of dangerous and unsightly poles. The committee, after secret session, decided to report the ordinance without recommendation.

Thus it will be seen that the fundamental point toward which this whole discussion must sooner or later tend was studiously avoided. There is no general wish on the part of the citizens of Scranton to pursue a policy of blackmail and extortion toward these corporations. There is certainly no widespread desire to unnecessarily harass them in the proper pursuit of their respective business functions. The plea that is made even by radical advocates of the pole tax, does not assume and dare not assume any such virulent shape. Intelligence and fairness must characterize action in this matter, not malevolence, illiberality, cupidity or spite. What Scrantonians want is such an enjoyment by the electrical companies of public franchises as will give them reasonable opportunities of profitable operation without encroaching intolerably upon the people's equal rights. THE TRIBUNE has not supported the pole tax proposition because it believes it to be a halting and compromising measure, and it sees no new reason to recede from that position. On the contrary, it believes that we can do better than to sell the right to deface our streets at \$1 per defacement. It believes that before this agitation shall have ceased we can persuade, if possible, or, if necessary, compel these electrical companies, despite their protestations of pecuniary embarrassment, to put every overhead wire in neat and convenient earthenware conduits, split every ugly pole into kindling wood, and throw every ugly cross bar to the junk pile.

ADVERTISE EARLY.

It strikes us that the Democratic managers of the Pennsylvania "machine" are wasting a good deal of precious time in their failure to make early efforts to capture a gubernatorial victim. Their convention is only a little more than three months off, and yet not a single advertisement has been inserted for sealed bids on the forthcoming nomination.

Under ordinary circumstances, perhaps it would not be necessary to feel

in any particular hurry with reference to this little detail. But this year the earlier the victim gets his name recorded on the slate, the longer will be his chance for preparation and atonement. Inasmuch as his fun will be limited strictly to the few fleeting weeks preceding the November election, it would seem to be no more than common kindness to start the ball rolling at once.

Suppose, then, that our Democratic friends by common consent drop this silly twaddle about "re-organization" and "harmony" and proceed to get into a position where they will have something to re-organize. So long as the only effect of this moon-baying was to amuse Commodore Singler, the public was disinclined to protest; but now that he, too, begins to show signs of weariness, why not end the farce altogether and strip for business.

Republicans want somebody to practice upon.

PROFESSIONAL FIDELITY to warring clients does not necessarily mean that opposing attorneys must do their legal sparring with five-ounce gloves. SENATOR QUAY's anxiety to resist an inquiry into alleged senatorial stock jobbing had its origin, it is said, in his desire to shield a friend. Such motive may be creditable to the senator's sympathies, but it does not wholly suffice to allay popular alarm. If any senator, whatever his party or name, has been guilty of playing with the public confidence to the enrichment of his own purse, and the fact can be proved, he deserves to have his name eternally listed among traitors and renegades. With each day of tariff delay adding millions of new impoverishment to the American people, it is no time to hold back legislation for private speculative purposes.

THIS IS, indeed, a bad year for Democrats, as both McKean and Dwyer would seem justified in observing.

FENDERS ORDERED.

General Manager Archer's promise of improved safety fenders on every street car of the Scranton Traction company within three months will yet further recommend his progressive management to the people of this city. So far as the central fact is concerned, it is immaterial what considerations may have prompted his announcement of this improvement before a committee of council charged with weighing the pole tax ordinance. It is enough for great majority of our citizens to know that the running of cars in crowded streets will soon not involve the risk to life and limb which it now involves, no matter how carefully the cars are run. Subsidiary questions can be attended to later.

To equip the 100 cars of the traction company with these improved fenders will involve an outlay of a large sum of money. Mr. Archer intimates that the cost will approximate \$10,000. But whether the total be below or beyond this sum, it will prove a paying investment, and one that will in the end be of mutual benefit. The traction company is not a corporation enjoying immunity from law suits. It is not a thing which can, for any length of time, successfully defy public sentiment. It has made its highest dividends when best striving to please its patrons. And it will doubtless endeavor in the future, as in the past, to continue these amicable relations with the people whom it serves upon which alone a lasting success is conditioned. Mr. Archer explained last evening that he had been considering the question of fenders for the past three months, but has been repeatedly disappointed at the failure of many boasted models to realize expectations. He has at last, however, discovered a type of fender which reasonably fulfills the conditions of safety, efficiency and practical cost. It is to be hoped that there will be no avoidable delay in the accomplishment of their attachment on all local cars. While traction accidents in this city have been surprisingly few, considering the large volume of traffic and the necessarily rapid and frequent movement of cars, it will be to the mutual interest of company and patrons to expedite all feasible precautions against them.

Thus Scranton continues to set the pace.

NOW THAT Boss Croker is comfortably close to the Mexican border, perhaps it would be wise for him to stay there and await developments. IN THE Philadelphia Press ex-Minister Charles Emory Smith pays a high tribute to the character, scholarship and diplomatic usefulness of Consul General John M. Crawford, whom it is proposed to supersede at St. Petersburg by a raw Democratic recruit. Mr. Smith justly arraigns the false partisan policy which disrupts our whole consular service with each veering of the home partisan pulse. No doubt, in principle, one party is as guilty in this respect as the other; but that only proves that both need vigorous amendment. Until men are trained and retained in this branch of the foreign service so that they shall become a fair match for the professional diplomatists of Europe, there will be no answer to the democratic cry which calls for the outright abolition of the whole system of official foreign representation.

THE GENIUS who can make one telephone pole do the work now done by three will need no larger title deed to fame.

ROSEBERRY'S PLANS.

Prophets of evil take advantage of each new chance to harness the progress of the movement for home rule. Their cry that Mr. Gladstone's voluntary retirement, at a time when his strength and power and influence were at their height, meant the overthrow of his policy and the virtual abandonment of the Irish movement was ridiculous upon its face. Discerning persons saw that Lord Rosebery could not, in a night, veto the projects which the yet living and dominant Gladstone had nurtured during anxious years; and the most of them had made up their minds, even before his recent speech, that he would not do this if he could.

That speech, therefore, with its unreserved acceptance of the premier's plans and the frank and cordial promise of prolonged fight along the familiar battle lines, comes as an expected, although agreeable, confirma-

tion. It is probably true that in his own mind Lord Rosebery thinks there are issues that in the ultimate analysis are more important than the pending problem of Irish autonomy. One of these undoubtedly is the radical reformation of the parliament at Westminster. Until the hostility of the lords, fanned by the sullen anger of a sympathetic queen and by the foreseen jeopardy of their own hereditary "rights," shall be overcome or at least mitigated, the immediate prospect of a satisfactory home rule law is not bright. It will doubtless be Lord Rosebery's purpose to remove this obstacle first, before proceeding the full length of the government's programme. Certainly, such a clearing of the way is undoubtedly essential; and any promises of home rule without it would be fairly open to suspicion and protest.

But in the end, as we have repeatedly said, home rule is certain of triumph, because it is certainly just and right. The Liberal party cannot afford, as a tactical move, to drop this question, now or at any future time short of its satisfactory adjustment. To do so would be to justify all the accumulated Tory charges of insincerity and bad faith. It would be to publish in universal history that Mr. Gladstone, the greatest commoner since Pitt, was also the greatest hypocrite since Cain. A party which should thus laugh and jered and flouted into permanent exile; and its leaders would thus sign the warrant and affix the red seal of their own political execution. Fortunately Lord Rosebery is not a candidate for the idiot prize.

NOW THAT the other fellow is licked, perhaps the successful Brazilian faction, those elevated patriots, will condescend to tell us what it was all about.

THE UNITED STATES senate, like Caesar's wife, undoubtedly ought to be above suspicion. But it isn't, nor will it offend senatorial dignity in this sugar transaction look otherwise to a large proportion of citizens than as an avowed corroboration of suspected guilt.

IRELAND has fought too long and too earnestly for home rule to let a passing feeling of petulance jeopard its cause forever.

DELAYED JUSTICE.

An annual custom at the university of Notre Dame on Letestare Sunday is to award a gold medal of honor to the Catholic layman who has best distinguished himself in some civic and intellectual direction. Considerable comment has been occasioned by the fact that the managers of this institution made the award for 1894 to Augustin Daly, the playwright and manager. Although opinion has been in the main commendatory, there have been chance expressions which suffice to indicate that a good deal of the old repugnance to "mere play folk" remains yet to be overcome before there can be said to exist a spirit of entire fairness toward one of the most arduous, exacting and ill-requited of artistic pursuits. But the unreserved recognition by a foremost Catholic college of the breadth and significance of Augustin Daly's work carries with it the inferential recognition of the drama as a whole and goes far toward lifting the undeserved odium which old-time prejudices among both Protestants and Catholics insisted upon placing upon the mimetic stage.

In this step toward sentimental justice the church has acted with unerring discretion, both as to the selection of the beneficiary of its token of honor, and as to the time of such recognition. In the entire list of American dramatic factors no name is so intimately and persistently connected with all this elevating and refining in our drama as that of Augustin Daly. Where other managers, in many instances, have sought to attract treacherous patronage by frivolous or meretricious methods, Mr. Daly has laid down as the two rules of his life, artistic thoroughness and fidelity. Upon that basis he has presented himself before the appreciative portion of the American people, sometimes meeting with discouragement, often sustaining financial loss, but always inflexible in his determination to achieve the best results by the truest and cleanest methods. If reward has been slow in coming it is at least permanent when it does come; for, while rival managers with cheaper methods may shoot meteorically upward the theatrical firmament, now rising into brilliancy and anon sinking into darkness and eclipse, Augustin Daly shines with steadily increasing lustre as a fixed star that today lights two grateful continents with the purity of its artistic effulgence.

In doing justice to this notably deserving career, the trustees of the university of Notre Dame have, it is believed, builded a broader foundation than they themselves are aware of. There is a lifting of the ban which has for centuries rested upon the workers of the stage. It is the glimmer of dawning appreciation which, as surely as it brightens into general and permanent sympathy, will inevitably exact from the votaries of the theater a higher morality and loftier standards of individual character, upon penalty of ostracism and rejection. For the anomalous spectacle of a great profession honored and dogged by public sentiment until laxity of morals and indifference as to deportment have become its second nature, the public itself, not the profession, is primarily to blame. When there shall be the same opportunities of honest appreciation and polite recognition open to actors that now extend before our lawyers, teachers and doctors, there will of necessity come a lifting of the standards of conduct to a higher and better plane; and in this evolution society will largely profit.

CERTAIN TYPES of blue grass aristocracy evidently would be none the worse for a liberal installment of blue mass pills.

GOVERNOR FLOWER has ceased to be an object of indignation, in connection with the Troy murder, and has become, instead, simply an object of pitying contempt. To a gentleman who conversed with him recently with reference to the Ross murder, he is represented as having said: "What am I to do? What can I do? I am a Democrat; was elected by Democrats and cannot look anywhere else for support. I cannot run a counter to my party; if I do, I stand solitary. The

Republicans will not help me. Therefore I don't see how I can act any differently from the way in which I have acted all along." That man who, as governor of the wealthiest, largest and by all odds the most influential American state, thinks his duty extends no further than to the fraud-working element to which he owes his election, no longer deserves sympathy, pity or even tolerance. He should be treated in straightforward and emphatic manner to the toe of the public boot.

EDITOR SWERLEY exultantly announces that his bright Williamsport Sun will continue to "shine in the pathway that leads to the success of Democratic principles." The receipt of postoffice perquisites has ever a strengthening effect on cuckoo loyalty.

Carelessness' Frightful Cost.

It has been estimated that the annual loss by reason of the prevalence of tubercular disease in the United States is not less than \$100,000,000. That this is no exaggeration may be easily inferred from the fact that 163,600 persons annually die of tubercular infection. Each death, it has been asserted by physicians, represents two years of sickness; and this is equivalent to a continuous proportion of 327,200 persons who are always on the road to the cemetery from this particular preventable cause, considered in the light of these aggregates, the neglect of sanitary precaution takes on the character of crime.

A Plain Invitation to Panic.

Can it be true that there is really any considerable body of men in this country who wish to see our money flat money, depending on and backed, not by gold, but on and by the government stamp alone? Can it be true that there is any considerable body that is willing to see us banish the gold dollar, both as circulation and as the standard of value, and substitute the silver dollar, debased as it is, less than one-half the value of the gold dollar? We shudder to think of what would happen if this were attempted.

Not a Cordial Farewell.

In three weeks the Maryland legislature will adjourn, and there will be many dry eyes in the state when that interesting event occurs.

The Pathological Puma.

Dan Coughlin is free but it is a mystery how sclerosis of the liver could have caused those thirteen gaping wounds on Dr. Cronin's head.

One Calamity Averted.

This year is not without its bright spots. George Francis Train has lost a trunk of manuscripts.

Do You Refer to Grover?

The people of the United States can never win by electing angels to the presidency and asses to congress.

Free Trade's Fallaciousness.

When people haven't the money, they can't buy, no matter how cheap may be the necessities of life.

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